

UPSTAGE

Sex workers ta

Actors Marsha Greenidge as CiCi and Rashida Harding as Peaches hard at "work".



GIRL ON FIRE PLAY SEEKS TO BUILD PUBLIC AWARENESS ON MAJOR SOCIAL ISSUES

The Lighthouse Foundation is at it again. This time it has incorporated prostitution to highlight the scourge of stigma and discrimination, as it seeks to build public awareness on major social issues like HIV/AIDS.

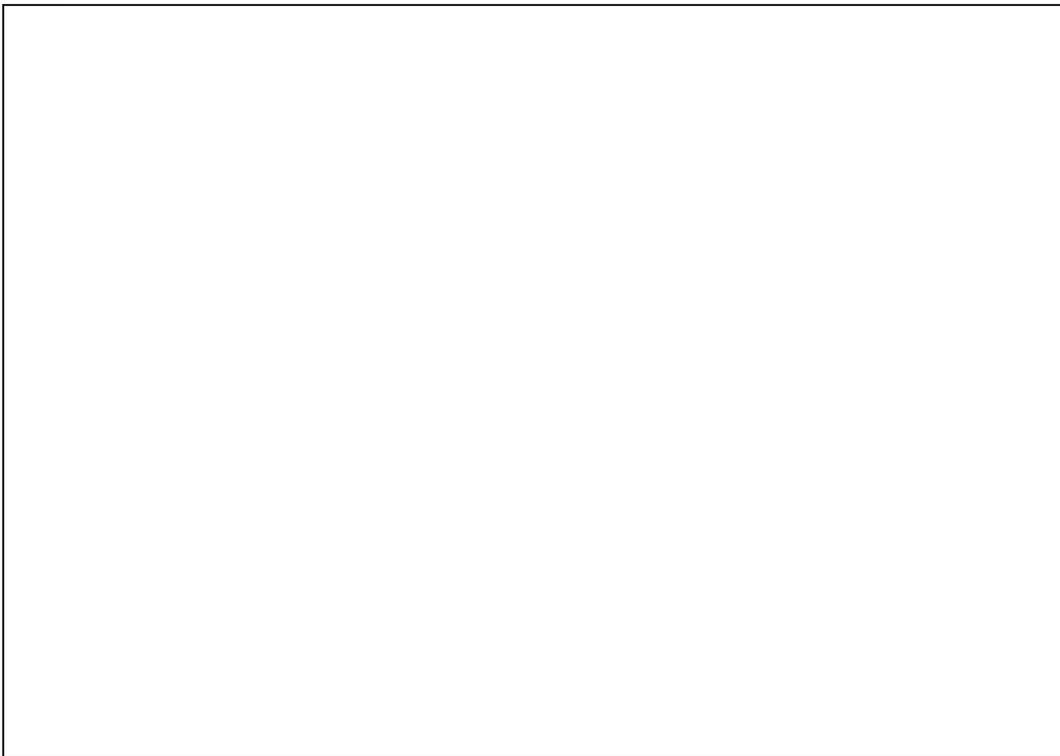
Coming on the heels of its first and successful production **Redemption Of Me** in 2012 is **Girl On Fire**. It will take place this **Independence** weekend — Saturday, November 30 and Sunday, December 1 — starting at 8 p.m. each night at the **Major Noel Hall** at Combermere School in Waterford, St Michael.

Speaking to **Bajan Vibes** at a rehearsal on Monday evening at Combermere School, one of the charity founders, Simon Alleyne explained that **Girl On Fire** is an adult play about sex workers in an intimate dramatic presentation about their lives and the stigma and discrimination they face and their risk of contracting HIV. The cast is all-female and the story follows **CiCi**, played by Marsha Greenidge, and **Peaches**, played by Rashida Harding, two "low-end prostitutes" with **Shanice** (Andrina Alleyne-Pile), **Rasheeda** (Dawn Grosvenor-Davis) and **Amanda** (Chantal Graham) the "high-class escorts".

Sharon Grant plays the role of the public doctor. The play was written by Mariel Oneyche, and since it is a play for adults 18 years and over only, strong language and sexual situations are expected.

Stating that the crew were ready and raring to go on opening night, Alleyne, who is also the director, said they all intended to

Shanice (Alleyne-Pile) on receiving bad news.



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ake centre stage

their message through to the populace. The audiences needed to be prepared for a true reflection of what is happening in the streets, he added.

To make the play as realistic as possible, Alleyne and cast did prior research, interviewing about 30 sex workers from Barbados, Latin America and other Caribbean countries, all of whom work in known "red light districts" like Bush Hill at The Garrison, and Nelson Street in The City, as well as in private sex clubs.

Alleyne told **Bajan Vibes**: "We believe we can make a change . . . because the arts is a powerful medium. Not many people are exposed to sex workers, but seeing them onstage sheds light on the issue of sex workers and HIV stigma and discrimination. People need to come out to the play because nothing like this has ever been done before in Barbados. Furthermore, the research we did makes the play credible."

The Lighthouse Foundation is a registered charity with a mission of building public awareness on major social issues through the performing arts and community-based projects. The charity was founded by Alleyne and his wife Suzanne in 2011. Once again the National HIV/AIDS Commission has partnered with Lighthouse Foundation through its **Civil Society Organization Grant Fund**, which is a World Bank-funded programme managed by the commission to assist civil society organizations in executing HIV-based projects.

Stage lighting is by IGM, audio by SoundWave, make-up by Adzil Stuart and Sherry-Ann Moore, and stage management by Shakera Williams and team.

Jennifer Sealy and **Dancin' Africa** have provided dancers for the show in selected scenes. Catering will be provided by award-winning chef Creig Greenidge.

Tickets are available at Secrexx, SkyMall, and Bridge Street Mall. Part of the proceeds will be donated to the HIV/AIDS Food Bank.

A special presentation will be made to actor and calypsonian Ishaika McNeil who recently suffered a house fire. **(KC)**

Shanice (Andina Alleyne-Pile) being consoled by Rasheeda (Dawn Grosvenor-Davis).



CiCi (Marsha Greenidge) recounting stories of "jobs" she performed.